

This rule is responsible for asemanic prepositions, which do not introduce their own PRED value and which are co-heads of their complements; prepositions which have such asemanic uses are specified as in (11), i.e., they introduce PFORM rather than PRED (cf. (12)).³

- (11) *on* P (↑ PFORM) = ON
(↑ CASE) = ACC
- (12) *on* P (↑ PRED) = ‘ON<(↑ OBJ)>’
(↑ OBJ CASE) = ACC

Returning to the PP rule in (10), its intention is that the position specified as “{ NP | CP }” may be filled by an NP alone, a CP alone, or a (possibly unlike category) coordination with such conjuncts; see Dalrymple 2017 and Przepiórkowski and Patejuk 2021 for two ways of implementing this behaviour. What is crucial in this rule is the requirement that this complement cannot start with a constituent whose COMP-FORM is THAT, i.e., it cannot start with a declarative CP. This is encoded with the help of the *L* operator, proposed in Dalrymple and Hristov 2010: 220 (on the basis of an earlier proposal in Kuhn and Sadler 2007), defined in (13).

- (13) $f_L \equiv f \in^* : \neg(f_L \in)$
 $\neg[(\leftarrow \in) <_f \rightarrow]$

If *f* is not a coordinate structure, then f_L is simply *f*, as in that case the path \in^* is empty and $\neg(f_L \in)$ is true. If *f* is a simple coordinate structure, then the path \in^* is a single \in , and f_L picks the left-most conjunct (this is ensured by the functional precedence constraint $\neg[(\leftarrow \in) <_f \rightarrow]$ involving off-path constraints). As this left-most conjunct is not a coordinate structure itself, the $\neg(f_L \in)$ condition is met. However, in the case of an embedded coordinate structure, where the first conjunct is a coordinate structure itself, this condition would not be met, so \in^* instantiates to a longer path – as long as necessary to reach the deepest left-most conjunct.

Given this analysis, lexical entries for relevant verbs are very simple, as in (14) for *depend*:

- (14) *depend* V (↑ PRED) = ‘DEPEND<(↑ SUBJ)(↑ OBL)>’
(↑ OBL PFORM) =_c ON

Note that *depend* does not need to stipulate that the oblique PP[*on*] it combines with may contain a CP; this is always allowed by the PP rule in (10). We leave it for future research to investigate whether there are verbs that require a PP which cannot contain a CP, not even an interrogative one (see immediately below); if there are any, and if this cannot be attributed to semantics, lexical entries for such verbs would require additional constraints.

Interrogative CPs While the debate in the literature has been focused on examples with declarative CPs, the fact that interrogative CPs are perfectly fine as direct complements of prepositions has largely been ignored. This is also true about prepositional complements of verbs figuring prominently in analyses of (1)–(3), e.g., *talk*, as in the following attested examples, where interrogative CPs are complements of (*talk*) *about*:

- (15) We talked about [why they haven’t done it yet]...
(16) We talked about [[how the leaves felt] and [what colours we could see]].
(17) Young people talked about [[how "powerful" they felt] and [that "it was a part of healing" to organize the action]].
(18) We talked about [[how creativity can be found anywhere], [going for a walk to get ideas] and [joining a football team]].

In (15) a single interrogative CP is a complement of *about*. Other examples show that it can also be the first conjunct in a coordination: of two different interrogative CPs in (16), of interrogative and declarative CPs in (17), and of an interrogative CP and two NPs headed by gerunds in (18).

Bruening and Al Khalaf 2020: 20, fn. 24, briefly mention in passing that “question CPs can serve as objects of prepositions”,⁴ but this possibility is left out of their formal analysis. By contrast, they are predicted by the proposed LFG analysis without any further stipulation.

To see this, note that the PP rule in (10) only specifies that the left-most conjunct cannot be a declarative CP (recall $\neg[(\uparrow_L \text{ COMP-FORM}) =_c \text{ THAT}]$). This means that the complement or any of its conjuncts can be an interrogative CP, perhaps in an unlike category coordination with (non-initial) declarative CPs, as in (17), or with NPs, as in (18).

³Note that the lexical entry in (11) assigns ACC to its complement, even when this complement is (a coordination containing) a CP. We do not see any empirical problem with that, but if this aspect turns out to be problematic, a more complex statement may restrict this assignment to nominal (conjuncts within the) complements. (For example, assuming the analysis in Przepiórkowski and Patejuk 2021, case assignment may be conditioned on the presence of the appropriately valued CAT attribute.)

⁴“We tentatively hypothesize that the NPs in these cases, being concealed questions or concealed exclamatives, might actually be syntactically of category CP. Alternatively, the CPs are actually of category NP (question CPs can serve as objects of prepositions, for instance).”

Conclusion and Limitations While the proposed analysis contains a clear stipulation in the form of the $\neg[(\uparrow_L \text{ COMP-FORM}) =_c \text{ THAT}]$ condition on complements of asemanic prepositions, it provides the first – to the best of our knowledge – uniform analysis accounting for 1) apparent “selectional violations” in coordination (no violations at all on this account), 2) non-connectivity in topicalization of CPs, and 3) the possibility of interrogative CP complements of asemanic prepositions, also within unlike category coordination.

However, it is imaginable that the ban on the P + CP[*that*] sequence is simply that: some kind of surface filter on the linear adjacency of prepositions and complementizers. Such a filter would not require the relatively complex condition on the left-most possibly deeply embedded conjunct within the complement of a preposition. However, it is not clear to us how such a filter could be stated in standard LFG.⁵

In any case, these two accounts would not be equivalent empirically, as their predictions would differ in the case of (19a).

- (19) a. You can depend on, I think, that Ted will arrive.
 b. You can depend, I think, on that Ted will arrive.
 c. You can depend on, I think, Ted’s arrival.
 d. You can depend, I think, on Ted’s arrival.

We assume a metarule that can insert parentheticals such as *I think* in various places, without otherwise affecting the c-structure. If so, (19a) is predicted to be ungrammatical on our account, as the CP[*that*] is still a direct local complement of the preposition, one that would have to be licensed by a rule such as the PP rule in (10). But, on our account, it is not licensed, given the explicit condition $\neg[(\uparrow_L \text{ COMP-FORM}) =_c \text{ THAT}]$. By contrast, (19a) should be grammatical according to the surface filter mentioned above, as the preposition and the complementizer are not adjacent there. Unfortunately, the grammaticality status of such examples is not clear to us, and for this reason we plan to perform a formal acceptability judgement experiment involving tokensets (Coward 1997) such as (19). That is, the experiment will have a 2×2 design, with the parenthetical either after the preposition (as in (19a,c)) or before it (as in (19b,d)) and the complement either a CP[*that*] (as in (19a–b)) or an NP (as in (19c–d)). If there is a significant interaction of these factors such that the parenthetical after the preposition improves the CP[*that*] condition but not the NP condition, then this would be an argument for the alternative – more surfacey – analysis. We hope to be able to report the results of this experiment at LFG 2026.

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⁵Within L_RFG (see, e.g., Asudeh and Siddiqi 2023), this could be perhaps stated via appropriate – probably rather complex – exponence rules.